

Are the 4 Imāms considered the Majority of the Scholars? And what's the ruling on Abandoning Salāh?

Shaykh Sulaymān al-'Alwān (حفظه الله) said:

For instance, the issue of abandoning Salāh. They say that the Madhab of the Majority of the Scholars is that the abandoner of Salāh doesn't disbelieve. Based upon that this is the saying of Abū Hanīfah (رحمه الله), Mālik (رحمه الله) and Al-Shāfi'ī (رحمه الله).

And this is correct, this is the Madhab of these [Imāms], and there's more than 1 statement from Mālik (رحمه الله) in the issue. However, are they considered the Majority of the Scholars? We mention the Ijmā' of the Sahābah that the abandoner of Salāh is an apostate, so how did it become the Madhab of the Majority [That he's not a Kāfir]? Therefore, they aren't considered the Majority of the Scholars.

Imām 'Abdullāh ibn Shaqīq al-'Uqaylī (رحمه الله), Imām Ayyūb Ibn Abī Tamīm al-Sikhtiyānī (رحمه الله), Imām Ishāq Ibn Rāhawayh (رحمه الله) and Imām Muḥammād ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī (رحمه الله), they are Imāms of Guidance, and from the Major Scholars of the Muslims, these Imāms mention the consensus of the Sahābah that whoever abandons Salāh is a Kāfir.

So how can it be said after this that the Madhab of the Majority of the Scholars is that the abandoner of Salāh isn't a Kāfir, basing that upon a saying that he read from Abū Hanīfah (رحمه الله), Mālik (رحمه الله) & Al-Shāfi'ī (رحمه الله)? This is among the mistakes in determining the Madhab of the Jumhūr [Majority of the Scholars].

The Madhab of the Majority of the Scholars isn't known by the sayings of the 4 Imāms alone. Rather it is said that this is the Madhab of Ahmad, this is the Madhab of Al-Shāfi'ī, this is the Madhab of Mālik, this is the saying of the 4 Imāms, that's completely fine.

However, it's not correct to say "This is the Madhab of the Majority of the Scholars", because these [Imāms] are simply 4 among the rest of the Muslim Scholars. They are 4 in opposition to 4 from the 7 Jurists, so there is 3 remaining among the 7 Jurists, then you have the Madhab of the Tābi'īn & the Madhab of the Sahābah until you can say that this is the Madhab of the Majority of the Scholars.